PHOENIX

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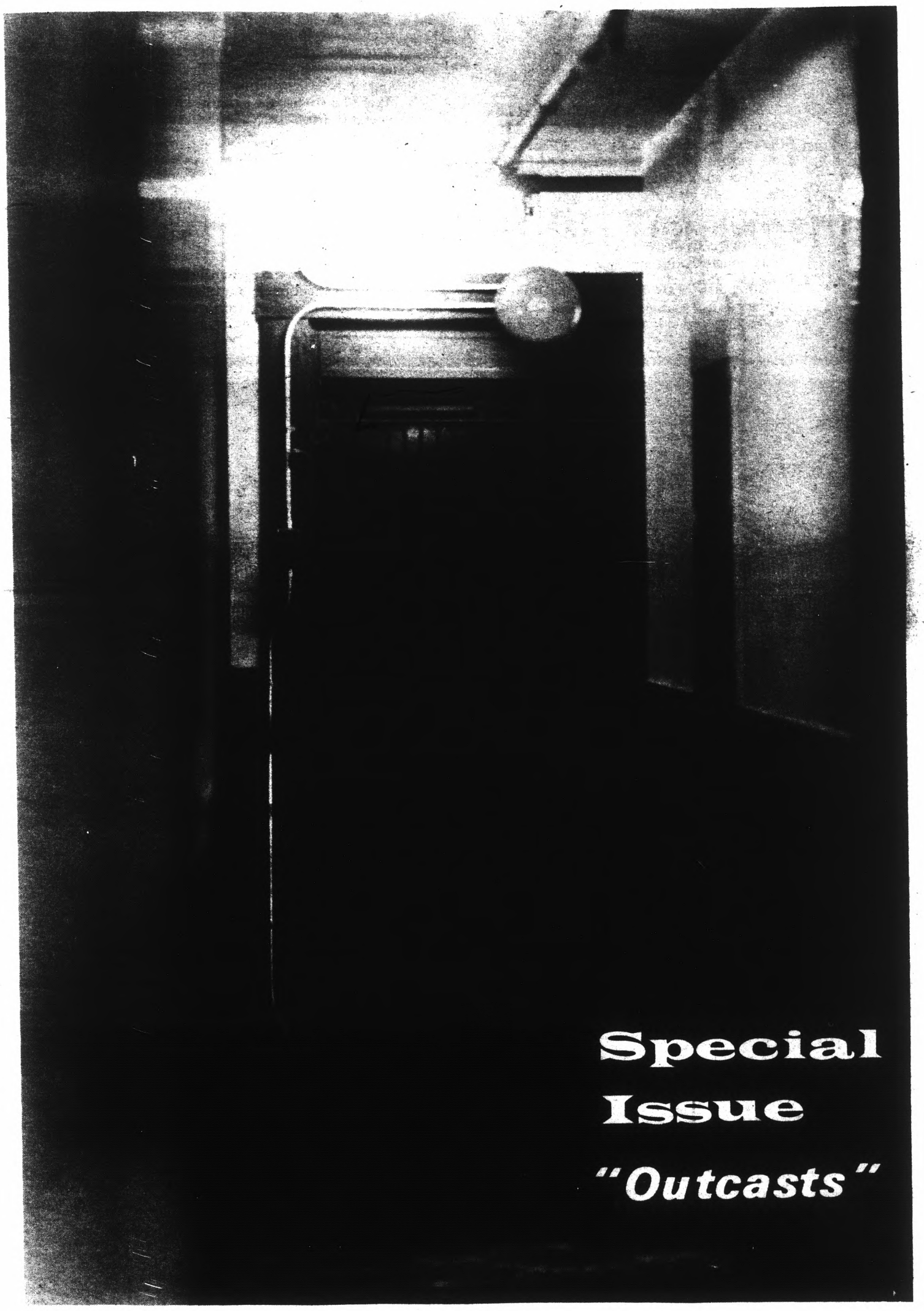

"Outcasts"

The article on page six is called "The Invisible People." It is a title that tells what this special issue is all about.

The invisible people are those on the outside of society looking in. They are the ones who are stared at, ignored, ridiculed or just pitied.

There is the skid row alcoholic, like Clarence Perry, who lives in the area described in the page four article as a place of "cheap hotels, pawn shops and unconscious bodies lining its crumbling sidewalks"; there's Sarah, the mentally retarded woman who tries to live a normal life, despite abuse from others; and there are the aged, forgotten and lonely, living in a convalescent home, where "Nobody comes to visit any more."

Other articles are on the ex-cons' problems as they return to society, and the disabled, whose biggest handicap sometimes is those who cannot accept them as a normal part of society.

Then there's the article on the free soup kitchen, where many alcoholics and other unfortunates eat their only meals; another which takes the medical approach, dealing with the American Schizophrenic Association; and another that studies the extensive use of "respectable drugs" such as barbiturates and amphetamines.

And for another story, we chose some of the nearly 200 letters written in response to a book in which the author gave a personal account of his son's drug addiction. The letters came from drug addicts and friends and relatives of those victims.

We have called this issue "Outcasts." It's not our term for the aged, handicapped, or the others mentioned, but it best describes the feelings many have for these invisible people. . .

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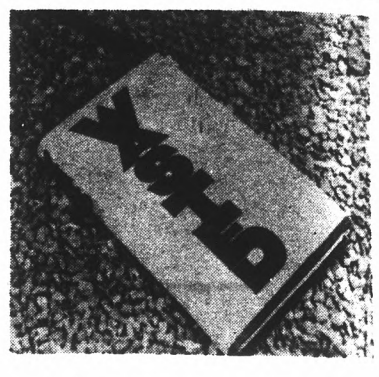

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No one comes to visit anymore

The elderly, lonely, forgotten and isolated. Filled with a feeling of uselessness

BY SHERA MIKELSON

Photo by Mathew Barr

I had tried to think of some excuse not to go to the convalescent hospital. I just didn't know what to expect in talking to the elderly.

The elderly are sometimes as much social outcasts as are the crippled and mentally handicapped. They are weeded out of society and isolated in such places as rest homes and convalescent hospitals; they are avoided and ignored.

Often, they are lonely. When I entered the lobby of the convalescent hospital, I was immediately surrounded by about seven patients eager to have someone listen to them. When I tried to walk by, one man grabbed my hand and said, "Hello, dear. You look beautiful today."

'You look beautiful'

I was flattered until, a few minutes later, an old, wrinkled woman walked by. "Hello, dear," he called to her in exactly the same tone of voice. "You look beautiful today." He was crushed when she didn't stop to talk.

In every hospital I visited, the situation was the same. The patients were old, many were sick, almost all were lonely.

One woman said she lived with her daughter until three years ago. "She never comes to visit me any more," she said. She lowered her eyes and whispered, "No one comes to visit me any more."

Jean Trimble said this situation is common. Trimble's aunt has been in a convalescent hospital for almost five months, and she has visited her almost every day.

No visitors

"Really I go to see the other people there," she said. "Some of the other people never have any visitors. It cheers them up when I come."

When asked about the care her aunt receives, she groaned. "The reason I go every day is to keep these people on their toes. When I don't come, they don't give her fresh water or bathe her or change her bed linens when she wets them, and the place always smells."

Other visitors in different hospitals had similar comments. "No wonder you never eat," I heard one woman say. "This food tastes terrible."

Most of the patient's contact is with nurses' aids. This job is easy for girls to get, not all hospitals have a training program, and the average time a girl stays is about three months. "And how," one woman said, "can 18-year-old girls relate to the 80-year-old women they take care of? They can't."

Not everyone in a convalescent hospital is unhappy. Golda Byrd, 72, has no complaints. "I like it here," she said. "If I can't go home (to my daughter), I want to stay right here." But she does want to go home.

"At home I always try to do the dishes, push the sweeper and wash my underwear," she said. "I feel useful there."

The feeling of uselessness, and many other problems of old people, are relatively new. When America was a rural, agricultural country, the grandparents were accepted as an integral part of the family and of society.

Then, when the industrial revolution came, couples were expected to find their own homes when married; there was no room for old people.

"In the late 1940s and early 1950s," said George Ferguson, Superintendent of Social Services in Santa Clara's Welfare Department, "the state mental hospitals were used as a dumping ground for the aged."

Ferguson, who has worked extensively with the problems of old people, said, "Like drug addicts, like alcoholics, like those with certain other afflictions, the aging tend to be disregarded, because in a work- and youth-oriented society, they are not productive."

Protect aged

However, he does feel that since the early 1960s there has been a move to "return status to the aging and protect them through the establishment of special departments."

As examples, he cited the establishment of rest homes and convalescent hospitals to remove the aged from mental hospitals. He mentioned California's law that anyone who needs out-of-home care must be placed in a licensed home. And he said that welfare departments in this state are mandated to furnish protective service.

Ferguson said protective service was "to protect the aging person from exploitation and from self-harm." The service is "in the nature of an 'inquiry of concern' when (we hear that) someone is being taken advantage of, or is in a living situation which is endangering."

Isolation

Ferguson emphasized the importance of resisting the urge to remove the person from society. "Isolation is the one thing you try to avoid with old people. . .They do not give up easily the thought of independence."

Although today more is being done to aid the aging in America, some are still social outcasts. To help the elderly, Ferguson suggested, "Have them as an accepted part of the community. Let younger people get involved and get to know them. You'll find they aren't such horrible people."

"Yes," his wife added. "Separation shouldn't be by age, but by interest. So my best friend can be nine years old if I want, or 90."

I can't truthfully say any of my best friends now are 90. But if I do meet any, at least I'll know what to expect.

The winos' slide down skid row

"Alcohol is our hardest drug in terms of crime, violence, mental disturbance and social disability."

BY JIM TOLAND

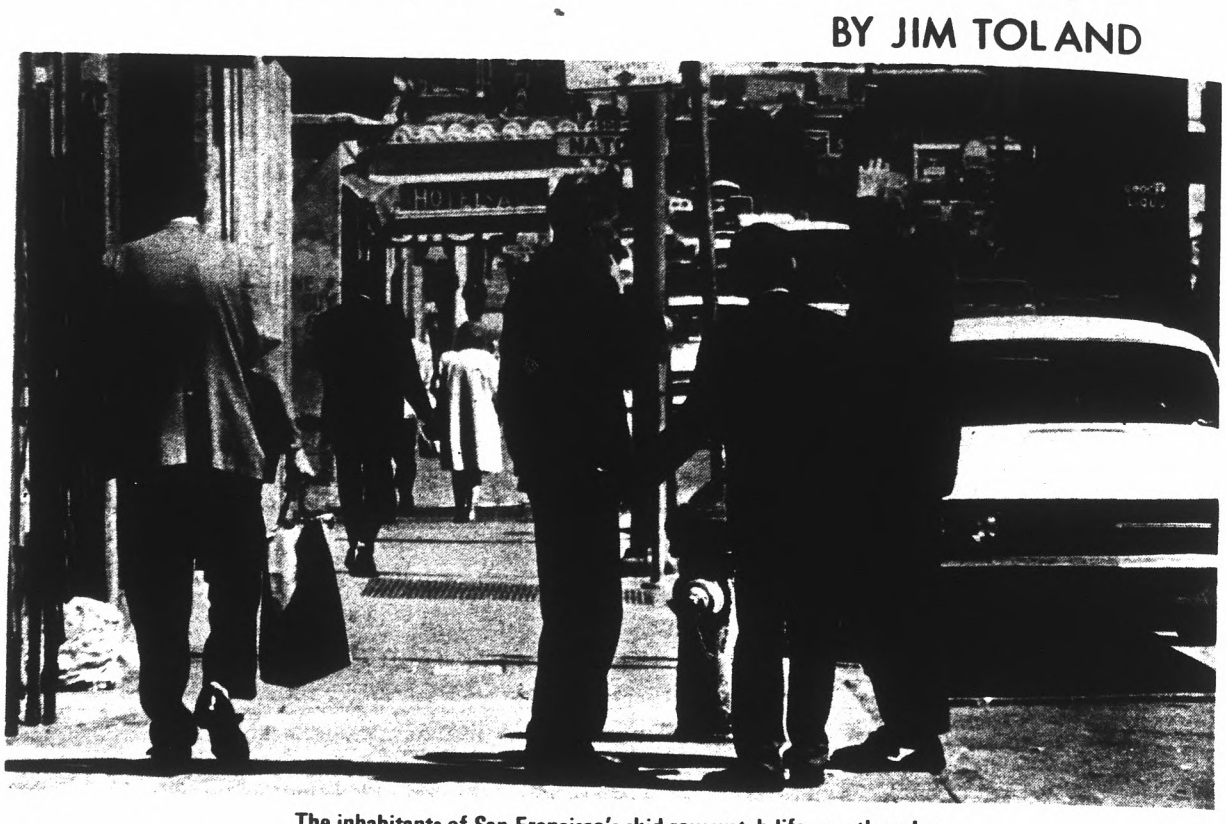


Photo by Greg Robinson

The inhabitants of San Francisco's skid row watch life pass them by.

"He demanded a drink from me and when I refused he cut my throat," said Clarence Perry, a San Francisco skid row alcoholic. "I don't know the other two victims," he said, referring to Reuben Misquiz and Robert Cox.

Misquiz and Cox, both transients, also had their throats slit. The attacks occurred in the early morning hours of Sept. 23, 1972, in an alley near Sixth and Howard Streets.

The Howard Street–South of Market Street area has been a haven for derelicts since the depression years. Cheap hotels, pawn shops and unconscious bodies line its crumbling sidewalks.

Not eating

The five foot, four and a half inch Perry is a stocky, gray haired man, 55 years old. "I feel pretty good since I was cut but I ain't been eating much. My welfare check hasn't come yet," he said.

Perry receives welfare under the Aid to the Totally Disabled program. "I got arthritis real bad and I also got a heart murmur." The former farm laborer from Chico, California, rubbed his scarlet streaked brown eyes. "Can you loan me a couple or three bucks? I'm hungry," he asked.

Like most of the tragic people on skid row, Perry lives in a rundown, South of Market hotel. These hotels are collections of corroded doors, shabby hallways, filthy carpets and cracked windows.

$13 a week

"I pay $13 a week for my room at the Finnegan Hotel," said Perry. "But I don't like to hang around there all day.

"When I can, I like to take walks. Sometimes I walk up to Civic Center. I sit there and talk to some of the guys I know." Perry tells these men about his attacker, the man's big knife and about how nicely he was treated at San Francisco General Hospital.

Edward Rezak and Charlie Tucker also spend their days sitting in the Civic Center. "As long as we don't panhandle, the cops leave us alone," said Rezak, an ex-cab driver from Philadelphia. The 52-year-old Rezak has been traveling around the country for 14 years. "I pick up a little money here and there. Sometimes I wash dishes. I used to hustle dames but I really can't do that anymore." Rezak wears a tattered gray workshirt and green jeans. His lobsterish complexion extends back to the top of his head. The few hairs that still remain on the top of his scalp are gray and brown. "I don't take such good care of myself anymore," he said.

Charlie Tucker doesn't remember whether he is 37 or 38 years old. "After the Korean War, I came back home to Arkansas and married my girl. We moved to Houston and I got a job in a factory. I used to go out with the boys from work and have a few drinks."

Don't remember

After several years, it became more than just a few. Tucker is nearly six feet tall and still has all of his blond hair. "I woke up one morning and Janice had left with the kids." He doesn't remember how long it has been since he has seen his family. "I just don't remember things too well."

Both Tucker and Rezak have no permanent address. "I guess I just wander into a joint and flop when I'm tired," Rezak said.

"Me, too," added Tucker.

"When I woke up this morning, the first thing I found was that somebody had stolen my shoes," said Robert O'Boyle, who had spent the night in a doorway on Third Street. "If I ever catch him," threatened the 46-year-old Bostonian, "he'll never steal anybody's shoes again." O'Boyle received another pair of used shoes the same day from The Salvation Army at 240 Fourth Street. "They fit okay, what do you want for free?" he said.

Like most men down on their luck, O'Boyle doesn't have much money to spend on food. "When I eat, I usually go to Saint Anthony's or the Life Line Mission," he said. (Both places provide free food.)

Alfred Jones is a slightly built black man from just outside Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Jones tried to establish himself in San Francisco. "First I went to the food stamp place, they told me that I could get an appointment in a few weeks and that if I was accepted to the program, I'd have to wait about another month to get the stamps. I said to hell with it and left."

He tried the Department of Social Services at 585 Bush Street next. "When I went into the welfare place, there was a lot of people waiting. A lady took my name and told me to wait. I waited almost three hours and they never called me so I cursed out loud and left." The 36-year-old drifter said, "You can always bum some money and a drink. Why put up with all that other crap?"

Former migrant

Tom Carrillo, a former migrant worker from the Los Angeles area, had better luck at the Department of Social Services.

"The first time I went there they told me that I would have to have some identification. I didn't have any," Carrillo said. "I wasn't born here and I don't have any papers. I managed to get a hold of a birth certificate

Continued on next page

Winos on skid row

Continued from page 4

and a social security card and used them to get general assistance. They gave me $15 a week for rent and a meal card.

"I got scared after a while and stopped taking their money. I was afraid I'd get caught. Now I deliver circulars in the mornings. It's wine money and I usually get a room somewhere."

Harry Pierson tried to get a job when he first came to San Francisco. "I had dried myself out and I went to the Veteran's Administration at 49 Fourth Street. They told me to try Human Resources Development so when I got there they sent me back to the VA."

When he finally spoke to someone at the VA, they told Pierson they were mainly concerned with placing Vietnam veterans. "Our funds have been seriously cut back," he was told.

Silver star

Pierson showed the interviewer his army separation paper which listed among his other citations and awards the silver star medal and two bronze star medals that he had won in Italy during World War II.

"Sorry," he was told. Pierson is going to find a job on his own.

"Maybe I can drive a Goodwill truck," he said hopefully. "If things don't work out I may go back to Ohio," the 47-year-old mumbled as he limped up Sixth Street towards Market.

Attitudes vary among skid row area hotel management. "We've got about 16 alcoholics registered here," admitted supervisor John Ruff of the Mars Hotel, 192 Fourth Street. "A couple came in last night from Redwood City."

No winos here

Charles Taylor, a clerk at the Windsor Hotel, 20 Sixth Street, said, "We don't have any winos here."

Ralph Wexler, manager of the Howard Hotel (originally reported as the scene of the Misquiz and Cox slashings) said neither Cox nor Misquiz had ever been registered in the hotel and that their only association with the hotel was that they had stumbled into the lobby after they were attacked and the clerk on duty, Edward Ryan, called for an ambulance.

John Shearer stumbled into the Adler Hotel at 175 Sixth Street. He didn't have the $2.65 needed for a room but the woman desk clerk gave him the room for $1.75.

"You can usually bargain with the hotel people," Shearer said. He makes his living by selling his blood. "I don't really sell my blood," he said. "I sell my plasma. When you donate plasma, they remove two pints of your blood, one at a time, and they keep everything but the red cells, which they pump back into you. It takes about an hour and a half. They pay you $5 every time you donate and they let you give twice a week."

There are two commercial plasma collection centers in San Francisco. Both are on Mission Street and both pay $5 per donation, United Biologics Corporation at 973 Mission and Consolidated Biologics at 2075 Mission. "I don't do it, but some guys go to both places during the week and collect $20."

The general attitude among San Francisco's policemen is: "Winos are very sick people, we can't help them by arresting them." The officers questioned felt that more detoxification centers are needed, like the one at San Francisco General Hospital.

> ***'I've been in and out of those treatment places. They didn't work for me'***

"The patient must come in on his own," the Hospital receptionist said to a woman trying to get treatment for her alcoholic uncle whom she described as "totally out of it." The receptionist said, "If you can get him to come in, the initial treatment will last up to six days. Of course, these first five or six days will be used just to get him back into normal physical shape."

The niece, crying, turned and asked no one in particular, "How can I get him to come in here, when he can't even make it to the toilet by himself?"

The large hospital at 21st and Potrero Streets, like most alcoholic medical-psychiatric services, is a voluntary treatment center only.

The Alcoholism Evaluation and Treatment Center, Clarendon Hall, in the Laguna Honda Hospital also offers treatment services for San Francisco alcoholics.

The hospital, on a hill overlooking Golden Gate Park, has three treatment programs.

The residential treatment service is a 21-day program which involves the patient in therapeutic activities designed to promote long-range behavioral changes.

A major objective is to assist the alcoholic in developing a life style free from the need of intoxicants. Residential facilities include a 45-bed ward, community activity areas, therapy rooms and a 24-hour nursing and medical coverage.

The day treatment program lasts from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is an eight-week structured program of daily activities much like the residential program except that it is especially oriented towards increasing socialization and independent functioning through interactional group planning and responsibility sharing.

The out-patient program, which meets at least once a week, is designed to provide therapeutic services for those who can benefit most from part-time therapy. These sessions, which are similar to the other two programs, meet for day or evening treatment.

Although the Alcoholism Evaluation and Treatment Center at Laguna Honda Hospital is not the only organization handling the problems of San Franciso's excessive drinkers, it is representative of the programs for alcoholism treatment.

The center is a division of the Bureau of Alcoholism, Community Mental Health Services. Besides its three main programs, it also provides a broad range of other alcohol related educational and consultation services.

It accepts referrals from all public and private agencies as well as family, friends, employers and health professionals, provided the problem drinker voluntarily desires involvement in the center's treatment program.

"I've been in and out of those treatment places before," said 67-year-old Joe Bogan. "They didn't work for me. I guess they work for some guys but as soon as I'd get out I'd hit the bottle again."

Bogan rubbed a burn scar which extends from the bottom of his right ear lobe to the top of his Adam's apple. "I got in in a Chicago hotel, I passed out and the bed caught fire from the cigarette I was smoking."

Like many winos, Joe Bogan arrived in San Francisco via the freight train. "I got off at the yards a few blocks from here," he said. He was obviously referring to the Southern Pacific Railroad yards at Third and Townsend Streets.

James McDonald, security agent for Southern Pacific, said, "We get about 2,000 illegal riders a month. We usually eject them from the yard the first time we catch them. If we catch them again we have them arrested. Section 587-B of the California State Penal Code makes it illegal to trespass on a train."

Conviction under Section 587-B, a misdemeanor, is punishable by a fine of not more than $50 or imprisonment of not more than 30 days or both.

The Bay Area chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism, 2340 Clay Street, reports that, "Alcohol is a mind-affecting drug, just as are marijuana, heroin, cocaine, amphetamines and barbiturates and its serious effects are more extensiving and damaging than all the others combined.

Society attitudes

"Yet there is a curious fragmentation of priorities and attitudes in our society regarding alcohol and other drugs and their patterns and consequences of use, misuse and abuse.

"Over 80 per cent of misdemeanor and felony offenses are alcohol related. Alcohol is our hardest drug in terms of crime, violence, mental disturbance and social disability. It accounts for 59 per cent of all mental health cases and 37 per cent of welfare recipients and is the leading cause of death either directly or as a contributing factor or complication in other illnesses or disorders and accidents. A third of all suicides committed are by alcoholics, a rate of 58 times greater than that of non-alcoholics."

The Council stated, "Twenty-four per cent of the alcoholics in California live in the Bay Area. San Francisco has 145,000 alcoholics. The skid row alcoholic represents less than five per cent of the total (about 700,000)."

Services available

There are over 50 different services available to the alcoholic and those on skid row in San Francisco. There are services for the Spanish speaking, for the American Indian and for all veterans. Alcoholics can get free food, free clothes, sometimes free shelter, free treatment as well as referrals to jobs and financial help.

The only drawback is that the person must get himself together to go out and seek the help available to him.

The problem with most agencies that provide the needed help is that they do not actively solicit for their programs.

A man could starve to death or die sleeping in a doorway, not knowing that there was actually help available to him. There is no communication between these agencies and the people they should be serving. If there were, why would Clarence Perry say, "I'm hungry"?

Photo by Greg Robinson

The invisible people

Mentally retarded adults face ridicule, few job opportunities

BY MARY ANN DURNEY

Sarah works from nine to five Monday through Friday like many people in the city. She buys her clothes at the Emporium like many women and rides the M-Car, grumbling about the service like many commuters.

Yet, people look at Sarah as if she is only half-human.

Sarah is mentally retarded. In our society, that means many times she is someone to pity or ridicule or one to look through and pretend does not exist.

•••

Sarah is one of about 6,000 mentally retarded adults who live in San Francisco. About three per cent of the nation's population is mentally retarded.

Mental retardation is subnormal intellectual development, either congenital or induced by brain injury and disease. It is characterized by impaired learning ability, social and vocational inadequacy or inability to learn connected speech.

Some people's retardation is not noticeable and they never receive testing and counseling, said Ken Kapc, counselor for the mentally retarded at San Francisco's Golden Gate Regional Center.

These people are simply passed off as slow and they never receive the training that could help them get jobs, he said.

People with noticeable retardation are tested by counselors at the State Rehabilitation Center and their ability to do different jobs is evaluated.

Training programs

Through the counselors, the clients are placed in training programs or jobs. The counselor remains in close contact with the client after he is placed, giving him encouragement with his problems.

Mentally retarded persons face many problems adjusting to society's ways, said Kapc. Their slowness and physical deformities are ridiculed and they face the task of teaching themselves to be self-sufficient when it takes so much time to master one thing.

But one of the toughest problems mentally retarded persons face is finding a job, said Kapc. Only about half of the persons who go through training programs ever find jobs.

The federal government provides most of the jobs for the mentally retarded in the city. They are employed in different service departments in different agencies. They are employed as postal workers, janitors and food workers.

Private industry

Private industry provides very few jobs for the mentally retarded in the city. About 500 are employed in private factories and as janitors in stores.

Some of the barriers that block the mentally retarded from getting jobs are lack of training and employer's lack of belief the mentally retarded can achieve at various jobs, said Kapc.

Photo by R.S. Poe

Inside Ming Chun's workshop, about 25 mentally retarded persons work quietly.

Ming Chun's workshop at 101 Townsend St. in the city helps to break down those barriers.

Whistles and wheels of factory life clang outside, but inside the workshop about 25 mentally retarded persons are working quietly, filling napkin packages, bagging beads and assembling plastic pins.

"We want to teach the workers how to begin, how to work, how to earn and how to be a taxpayer," said Chun, who began the workshop in 1947.

"We believe if they can learn an art or skill, they can face the outside world."

Prepare for jobs

The workshop is a self-supporting, nonprofit organization for disabled employes. Chun trains these people in skills to prepare them for jobs in the community. The workers are paid a salary in proportion to the amount of work they produce.

The people who attend this shop have been evaluated by the State Rehabilitation Center or State Department of Mental Health. Their potential for developing skills is measured.

Yet, only about half of the people who go through the workshop find jobs in the outside community.

Chun is a patient man with bright eyes who explains everything thoroughly. He organizes the work, finds jobs, supervises and counsels the workers.

Handicapped

"To me the mentally retarded are not handicapped. They are human beings, they are my family," said Chun. Chun said to treat a mentally retarded person as a child is a terrible mistake. "They do not want to be treated as children," he said. "They want to feel they are their own person, to feel they are somebody."

Chun works with each person who comes to the workshop on an individual basis. "We listen to them, to the way they sit, to which hand they use," he said. "It's hard to say how I am going to start."

Chun said after he wins trust with his clients they can relax and discuss their own ways to work together. Many workers have more than one handicap; many are deaf and mentally retarded. Chun breaks the work down into many simple processes and places the workers at the job that suits their condition.

Pat, a 32-year-old woman with curly blonde hair, has good manual dexterity. She is trained by Chun to do the fine work like tying bows of ribbon on plastic baby pins.

George, tall and lanky, has poor dexterity and does better at such jobs as packaging and wrapping goods. Chun has devised the program so each job can be divided into five different jobs.

"Each person does the job he is capable of and there is a very low degree of frustration," said Chun. "Mentally retarded people are generally impatient."

Chun has subcontracted jobs from various companies in the city. Through his insight into the capabilities of the mentally retarded, he was able to get a variety of jobs. "We were only able to subcontract a job to bag beads after we could prove the workers' count of the beads would be correct," he said. Chun devised a wooden counter that scooped the beads and insured accurate count.

Paycheck small

At first, the worker's paycheck is small, but as the worker does the same process over and over again, he develops speed and accuracy and makes more money.

"The salary is important to the worker," said Chun. "They feel they are sufficient, that they are real members of society now that they are taxpayers."

When the worker shows he can work a full day, Chun consults with the rehabilitation counselor and the counselor places him in a regular employment.

But finding jobs is difficult, said Chun. "Many employers just do not see the capabilities of the mentally retarded person," said Chun. "Our workshop has made much progress, but there is a long way to go."

"Many people do not see the mentally retarded person as a human being," he said.

•••

Sarah is used to being treated poorly. She senses when people are making fun of her or are afraid to look at her at all. Now, when people stare or point at her when she passes by, she turns her face away.

One of the most important things to Sarah now is her job in the processing center in the city. She is doing a good job and is proud to tell her friends that she is working.

But the most important thing is that she feels self-sufficient. That to her is the best feeling of all.

Pity, hostility — the life of the disabled

Photo by Debra Roberts

Pat Hays, who has lost the use of his left eye, and has an artificial right hand, found it hard to find work.

Disabled people face many problems because society does not accept those who have physical handicaps

BY ED HARTZLER

When Bonnie Roosma was looking for work last summer, the ad on the Placement Center's bulletin board seemed to be the answer to her problem.

The ad had been placed by a small restaurant looking for someone who could make sandwiches. Since Roosma had done that kind of work before, she decided to apply for the job.

"As soon as I walked through the door, the woman behind the counter began yelling and carrying on," said Roosma. "Even after I told her I was able to handle the job, she kept saying she didn't need me. She really freaked out about it.

Job filled

"Finally, she told me the job had been filled. But that notice remained on the bulletin board for another two weeks," Roosma said.

Bonnie Roosma is a disabled person, a victim of a spinal ailment, and her experience in the cafe was typical of what disabled people go through in everyday life.

Many of the problems faced by disabled people stem from society's inability to handle people who are physically disabled, Roosma said.

"Hostility toward the disabled is rarely expressed openly," she said. "It is more like fear or disgust. Sometimes little children stop and talk to me and their parents pull them away."

Didn't tell

Roosma said she originally didn't tell prospective employers about her handicap.

"At first I thought I could go down, and even if they said they couldn't use me, talk them into giving me a job," she said. "This didn't work, so I began telling them about my handicap when I first talked to them over the phone. If they didn't want me, I wouldn't have to spend time and money going down to apply for the job."

When she finally found work last summer, it was a combination public relations-soliciting type of job.

"I would go into downtown office buildings, make a pitch for the company I was representing, leave some literature and leave," Roosma said.

Treated as beggar

Roosma said people often gave her quarters, as if she were a beggar. She found such actions "very offensive."

"Pity bugs me," said Roosma, "especially the slobbering kind."

The Disabled Students Union, which Roosma heads, tries to improve conditions for disabled students on campus, urging more and better facilities for the handicapped.

But what of the disabled person who is not in college, or who is alone in the world, with no relatives or friends to turn to?

For these people, life can be harsher and more frustrating than it is for a disabled student. Pat Hays is such a person.

An orphan

Hays, an orphan, lost the use of his left eye at age eight, when a piece of metal from a hammer he was using broke off and flew into his eye. Despite this handicap, he was able to find work when he left the orphanage at fifteen.

"I've worked as a janitor, a service station attendant and a ranch hand," said Hays. "I've done a little bit of everything."

In 1971, however, Hays was involved in an automobile accident and lost his right hand. He now wears an artificial hand for leisure and a work hook for work.

"I found it very hard to find work after I became a doubly handicapped person," Hays said. "Once I applied for work in a plant that made automobile springs, but the manager, while admitting I would be able to do the job, thought it would be too dangerous for me to work around welding torches. He was afraid that a spark from a torch could put out my other eye."

Outright refusal

Hays said he found only one case of outright refusal to hire him because the employer didn't think a disabled person could handle the job.

"Some druggist told me right out that he didn't hire disabled people," said Hays. "But I got the feeling that the other employers wanted to give me a job, but couldn't because the insurance companies raise the premiums on an employer who hires a disabled person."

In 1971, Hays went to the Salvation Army for help. He was accepted into the Men's Social Services Program and went to work loading and unloading the Red Shield trucks.

"I worked hard, unloading couches, refrigerators and other things. I wanted to show people that I could work if I got the chance," said Hays.

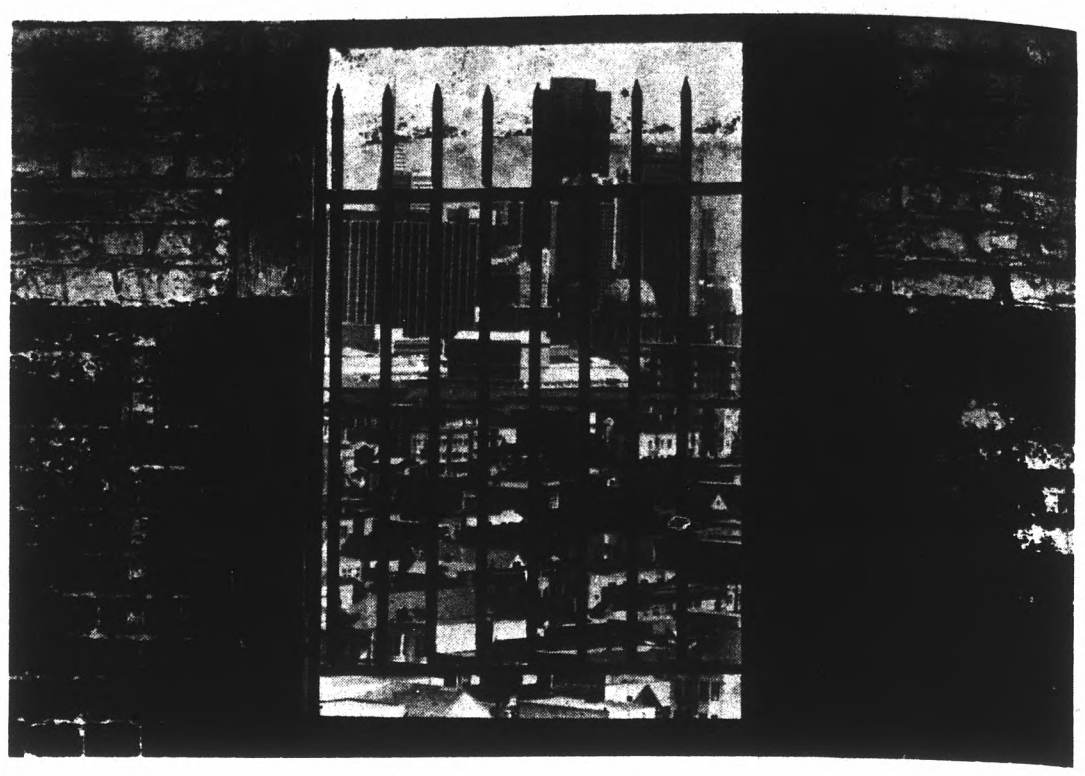
Shop janitor

After becoming a full-time employe of the Salvation Army, Hays moved to San Francisco in 1972. He is now the shop janitor at the Men's Social Services Office at 1500 Valencia Street.

"The Salvation Army was the first place that gave me an even break," said Hays. "But the important thing is to have a good attitude and not go around feeling sorry for yourself. I don't feel sorry for myself at all."

A difficult time awaits ex-convicts looking for employment

BY PAT SOBEL



Composite photo by Kurtz and Wells

Making it on the outside, an uphill battle for ex-cons

"Slave or citizen, your choice. Hire an ex-con."

The words are from a poster hanging on the parole unit wall at Human Resources Development (HRD). For many ex-cons, the inability to secure employment led them to crime and prison in the first place.

"It's a vicious cycle," said Joe Breiteneichur, consultant with the Employment Law Center at 795 Turk Street. "People in prison are told they don't have the potential for anything, and then the public wonders why they wind up back in the slam."

Difficulties

The ex-cons need jobs, but there are many reasons why there is such difficulty in finding employment:

- Many of the ex-cons are unskilled.
- Employers are afraid to hire sight unseen.
- The type of crime the prisoner served time for will affect the kind of jobs available.
- Many of the ex-cons leave prison disorganized and with bad attitudes.
- Some employers have bad impressions of all ex-cons because of a few bad experiences with some.
- And in the case of women, it is even harder to get hired.

Mark Dowie, 33, has been a counselor at Transitions to Freedom since its inception three years ago.

"We work with one very bright objective, improving the employment situation for anyone, male or female, who is returning to the community from any penal institution," Dowie said.

"When I found out how hard it is to find employment for ex-cons, I started doing this," said Dowie, who said he has worked with prisoners for six or seven years.

Never worked

Dowie related the story of one ex-con and former addict, who never worked a day in his life.

"Here's a guy who lived in San Francisco all his life, graduated from high school and absolutely can't read or write," he said.

Dowie, who described the young man as 24 or 25 years old and very friendly, said he found him a job as a delivery boy, but it meant riding a bike.

"He refused to take the chance that some of his friends might see him riding a bike," he said.

Connections

Then Dowie found him a job in a barber shop where he could meet people and possibly make some job connections.

"He quit after the first day. The kid's in trouble and close to going back to the needle," Dowie said.

Reg Benuit, 44, a high school graduate with two and a half years of college, entered San Quentin for armed robbery when he was 27 years old. Benuit was paroled in 1970 and got a job through Release Upon Approved Parole Plan (RUAPP).

Benuit started the Specific Committee on Parole Employment (SCOPE) while in San Quentin in 1967. The program got employers to come to the prison for interviews. Benuit said today all labor unions are represented in the program

He continued, saying that generally the ex-con is unskilled.

The Department of Corrections, he said, has several pamphlets, which describe Industrial Operations, vocational programs and academic education as becoming increasingly effective. One pamphlet said recently, many new developments have occurred, in-including the establishment of training courses geared toward the job market of the 1970s.

But Dowie criticized the programs.

"Vocational training is only available to about 10 per cent of the prisoners, and there is a long line-up because some people see it as their only chance once they get out," he said.

Conflicting statistics

Dowie said a Department of Corrections study showed 35 per cent of ex-cons are able to secure employment in the trade they were trained for. Dowie said he knew of an independent study that showed only a 12 per cent figure.

"The equipment is obsolete and the instructors are those who couldn't find work elsewhere," he said. "They are at the end of the line."

Dowie continued, "There is

Continued on next page

Ex-cons' problems

Continued from page 8

very little similarity to outside industry," citing license plate manufacturing as a good example.

Breiteneichur also found fault with the system, and said there is virtually no training in prison, and when there is, the system fights itself.

"What good does it do to train a convict in barbering when he can be kept from obtaining a license because of moral turpitude?" Breiteneichur asked.

No markets

Juanita Aranda, an employment counselor at Mission Rebels for the past three years and one who helps ex-cons on a limited basis, said a prisoner may come out well-trained as a butcher or a laundryman, but there is no job market for the skills.

Benuit, however, disagreed.

"I think prison jobs are important because they teach job responsibility and adjustment to job dissatisfaction," he said. "All vocations are available, and a person can go from third grade through college if he or she wants."

Reluctant

In many cases, employers are reluctant to hire sight unseen, and as a result only a minority of convicts have a job prior to release.

Carmen Smith, who has worked as an employment counselor at the Urban League for six years, said she received 10 to 15 letters a month from prisoners wanting to know if they could be guaranteed a job upon parole.

"I can't guarantee it, because it depends on what's available when they are released," she said.

"Getting a job for a convict is hard, because most companies do hiring based on an interview," Aranda said.

Employers

Despite efforts to increase employer-prisoner contact, there is a problem in finding receptive employers.

Dowie, who said he's found ex-cons employment in about every kind of company, said he's found better results with smaller companies of 50 or less.

"There is more personal contact and the smaller companies are usually not bureaucratically oriented," Dowie said.

It is a matter of sensitizing people, because their whole attitude is based on stereotyping and fear, he said.

"We have to learn the language of the business world, but they don't understand ours," said Aranda.

A third problem of ex-cons is the employment policy that varies with the type of job and offense.

"If a person was in prison for a drug offense, it would be difficult to get him a job in a hospital," Smith said.

The ex-con has little legal recourse available to him if he cannot get a job because of prior offenses.

Legal action

Peter Shehan of the American Civil Liberties Union said there is some legal action possible if an ex-con feels he has been discriminated against in a local, state or federal job, but the law shows there has to be some rational connection between the job and the crime.

"An ex-con convicted of molesting kids couldn't expect to get a job as a grammar school teacher," he said.

Banks can not hire a person convicted of a felony of defaultation (failure to fulfill a contract) or dishonesty.

"If there is a known felon on the payroll, the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) can fine us up to $100 a day while that person is on the payroll," said Bob McElroy, a Bank of California personnel employer..

Can't recall

Earl Aurelius, who has been in Wells Fargo employment relations 10 years, said he could not recall hiring an ex-con. "We look critically at someone who has served time," Aurelius said.

Emmet McFarland, four years in the employment office of Metropolitan Life, said two ex-cons had been hired recently by that company.

A fourth reason an ex-con may appear not to want a job is because many are disorganized.

"Less than half the people who make appointments with Transitions to Freedom, don't come. It's not because they don't want a job, but they are so disorganized, they forget," he said.

Dowie said he recommends address and appointment books to ex-cons.

"We also advise ex-cons on how an interview goes, how to write a resume, look at the newspaper and yellow pages, and tell them about HRD and every training program," he said.

Ineffective

Dowie said pre-release counseling was generally ineffective and inhibiting.

"Most counseling is limited to 'don't get in trouble or you'll get busted,' " Dowie said.

There should be counseling in every legitimate means of survival, such as food stamps, he said.

Benuit said an ex-con's attitude towards himself is an obstacle to successful employment.

He said many ex-cons he runs into are looking for the comradeship they found in prison.

Another problem is that employers sometimes form general negative opinions of ex-cons or are afraid to hire because of bad past experiences.

John Bunyard, the alleged Nob Hill rapist, was one client of the HRD parole unit. Benuit predicted the charges against Bunyard and the recent publicity on mass murders would have a poor effect on employers' attitudes. He recalled a job interview he had during the Manson trial

"I went to the Folger's company without thinking one of theirs had been murdered. Here I was, an ex-con who had shot up people. They almost literally threw me out," he said.

Employers' reactions

The employer who willingly hires an ex-con is not always satisfied with the results, but their reaction varies.

"If I get someone to hire an ex-con and it doesn't work out, a lot of times they won't hire any again," Dowie said.

One man who wished to remain anonymous has been at an individual insurance agency for 15 years and has never hired an ex-con.

"It's a moral hazard because you are dealing with public funds and contracts. If the offense was something other than theft, it would depend on the person's talents and background," he said.

"Frankly, I don't know any ex-cons," he said, laughing. Howard Henderson, general personnel director for all Emporium stores, said the hiring policy requires the person to be bondable.

Insurable

A bondable person is one who can be insured by the employer, in cases of theft or dishonesty. A person convicted of a felony of defaultation or dishonesty cannot generally be bonded, although Viki Wicks of HRD's parole unit said HRD offers a $10,000 bond to employers if they want it.

"If they are bondable, we review their other qualifications," said Henderson, "but I'm not aware of any hired at this time."

The question of whether it is more difficult to secure employment for women ex-cons drew varying opinions from employment counselors.

Women not asked

Dowie said it was easier to find a woman ex-con a job, because most employers don't ask a woman whether she's been in prison, although he said it does depend upon the type of job.

"The more slave-oriented the job is, the better, because there aren't long forms to fill out," Dowie said.

Dowie estimated he had gotten 15 women ex-cons jobs within the last two years. He said a third of these were waitress jobs, a third were clerk-typist jobs and the rest were in other fields.

Image problems

Wicks said she had a more difficult time finding women employment because of a woman's image. "Many look down on ex-cons because they feel a woman shouldn't be in jail," Wicks said.

'It's a vicious cycle, cons are told they don't have potential... so they wind up back in the slam'

Composite photo by Kurtz and Wells

The face of Tendrlo

Photos by

David Cole ar

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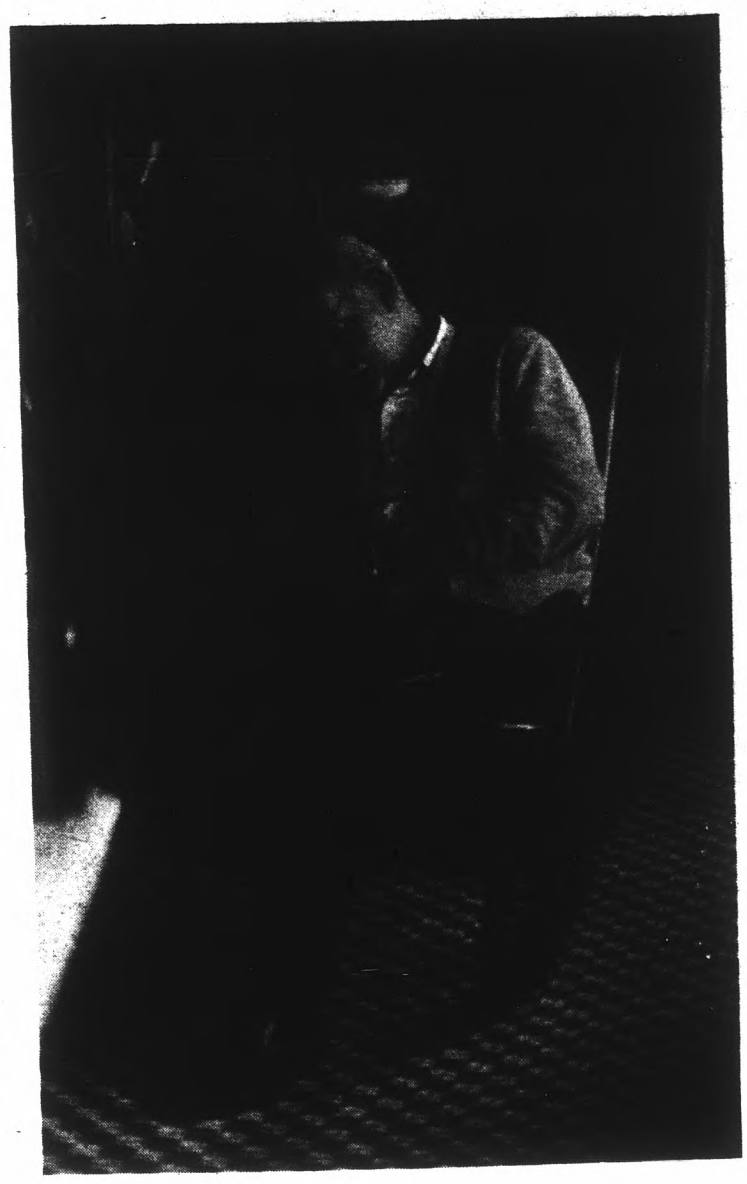

otos by
vid Cole and
eg Robinson

Special school for kids with brain damage

BY SUE SATRIANO

Johnny can't read but daily therapy helps him learn

Johnny has been in school for four years and still cannot read. He is overactive and easily distracted. Physically he appears to be like any other seven- or eight-year-old boy.

Johnny has a severe language problem which makes it difficult for him to put his thoughts into writing. He cannot read because he cannot interpret the words he reads.

Johnny hasn't developed the concept of language, and he has perceptual and auditory memory difficulties.

Near SF State

Johnny goes to the Diagnostic School for Neurologically Handicapped Children adjacent to SF State. He lives in a dormitory with three other boys and has been put into a special program to overcome his handicap.

Since his arrival at the Diagnostic School, Johnny has been put into a highly structured program. Day after day he is exposed to a patterned lifestyle. He receives daily therapy for reading, writing and language skills. Before he was admitted to the school Johnny was tested and placed in a special education class where the teacher developed an individualized program for him.

After nine months at the school, Johnny returned to his home where he was able to function in a regular school program with additional help in reading. Academically he had gained two or more years in nine months' time.

Typical example

Johnny is an example of a typical case being helped by the Diagnostic School. He is termed "neurologically handicapped" because he has a serious learning disability usually connected to some type of brain damage. Emotional problems such as frustration due to poor achievement can also cause learning disorders of this nature. The school's job is to find a way to work around the disability and develop the child's academic skills.

Alice A. Brandt, superintendent of the Diagnostic School, said the school accepts only children of average or above average intelligence. "We offer an intensive program for children we want to salvage," she said.

During an initial one-week evaluation period the parents accompany the child and remain at the school. The evaluation team then arranges a conference with the child's school district to discuss placement.

"If a child has a problem the school district can't help with, we give him resident status," said Brandt. "It usually takes three to nine months to expand what we've found and to find an educational prescription to help the child learn." According to Brandt, the criterion of acceptance is whether there is a program for the child near his home.

Special schools

The State Department of Education operates four other "special" schools in California: the School for the Deaf and Blind in Berkeley, the School for the Deaf in Riverside, and two neurological schools in L. A. The Diagnostic School for Neurologically Handicapped Children, located at the corner of Lake Merced Boulevard and Winston Drive, does not accept the mentally retarded.

The school has 84 staff members, all highly skilled. It employs psychologists and social workers and medical and clerical help. It demands a master's degree in special education and several years' experience from its teachers.

Waiting list

Brandt said the school can accommodate 36 resident students. It has a waiting list of approximately 200 with a 10- to 12-month waiting period. A child may not remain in the program for more than one year.

Financially, the school, which serves northern California, is supported by the state and receives ADA or Average Daily Attendance monies. To the parents of the children the services are free.

Originally, the Diagnostic School was built for cerebral palsied children, but it was later converted to accommodate the neurologically handicapped. Authorities said this decision reflected the growing need for treatment of language or learning problems in the state.

Maps, charts and ABCs line the walls of the classrooms. Russell Nichols, supervisor of staff development and training, said the rooms are arranged this way deliberately. "There is no attempt to alter the surroundings. We want the child to learn to function normally so when he leaves it will be the same."

Aids help

With the aid of tape recorders, cassettes and a machine called a language master to replay one's own voice, students can work independently a portion of their time. During other class hours, teacher and student work on a one-to-one basis.

During recreation time, the students play baseball, basketball, hopscotch, pool and shuffleboard. After school, recreational activities are coordinated with the child's problem. Many of the children are poorly coordinated and bowl and swim to build their muscles.

The state-supported school offers college students training opportunities in areas such as special education, speech and language therapy and school psychology. Staff members are willing to assist those who wish to learn their methods and techniques.

Photo by Jim McVay

With help youngsters can gain two or more years academically in nine months.

Schizophrenia -- a chemical imbalance may be its origin

BY JOHN UPSHAW

Photo by Greg Robinson

Over two million Americans yearly are afflicted by schizophrenia. Many are young adults.

For a great many years it has been assumed that this mental disorder was caused primarily by psycho-traumatic experiences, situations in which an individual feels so threatened by the so-called "reality" around him that he is forced to flee from it, thereby withdrawing into a chaotic and isolated reality of his own. In some cases, suicide follows.

However, recent information compiled by researchers in the field of neuro-physiology suggests that the origins of this tragic disease may very well lie within the stricken individual and that the culprit may be nothing more than a lack of vitamins. It's not so simple as that, but nearly.

Sigmund Freud

Even Sigmund Freud characterized schizophrenia as of a chemical origin and predicted that it would be more certainly cured by a chemist than by a psychoanalyst.

Earlier this month members of an organization calling itself the American Academy of Orthomolecular Psychiatry met in the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco to compare notes on their investigations into the chemical manifestations of schizophrenia and the successes they as scientists have had in curing it.

Among the more speculative methods of therapy discussed in the two-day symposium were such ponderously labeled treatments as the "Full Light Spectrum Therapy" espoused by Dr. Robert Newboult and a "Fasting Therapy" for "starving yourself into sanity" by Dr. Allan Cott of the Huxley Institute of Bio-Social Research in New York.

Increases disorders

Newboult's light spectrum theory holds that a lack of light can increase psychological disorders. He said that many of the symptoms of schizophrenia in his patients had been reduced by supplying "full-spectrum light" on a regular basis. What is full spectrum light? Sunshine.

For some reason, explained Newboult, the symptoms of schizophrenia are aggravated by deprivation of natural light and ultra-violet radiation. He said that even in "normal" persons, deprivation of full-spectrum lighting could cause schizoid behavior patterns. For this reason Newboult said he was using something called a "Vita-light" in his office.

Dr. Cott's "Fasting Therapy" consists of some remarkable documentation of studies he had undertaken in New York which were aimed at changing the physiology of schizophrenics through fasting.

Dr. Cott told the Academy that he had fasted some obese schizophrenics over a period of four months. "After a 10-day period the patients lose their desire for food," said Dr. Cott.

He explained that this type of therapy required the agreement of the patient's family and, of course, the full cooperation of the patient. The treatment so far, said Dr. Cott, has been extremely successful.

Megavitamin therapy

The major area considered at the symposium was "megavitamin therapy." The "megavitamin" treatment received much more support throughout the scientific community.

David R. Hawkins, director of North Nassau Mental Health Center in Manhasset, Long Island, said the treatment reduces the amount of toxic chemical compounds present in the schizophrenic's body, which because of abnormal metabolism is abnormally high.

Some of these chemicals are capable of producing perceptual distortions such as hallucinations and faulty thinking. These compounds have a similarity to LSD and mescaline molecules.

Supplements psychotherapy

Dr. Hawkins, though a proponent of the "megavitamin" treatment, makes it clear that it doesn't replace, but rather supplements, psychotherapy and conventional drug therapy.

Hawkins said the treatment, coupled with normal psychotherapy techniques, can almost double the recovery and halve the rehospitalization rate of schizophrenic patients.

Hawkins reported that out of 5,000 schizophrenics he treated with massive doses of vitamins, improvements were seen in over 4,000.

In San Francisco, there is a place for schizophrenic persons. The American Schizophrenic Association (ASA) has a local chapter on Irving St. in San Francisco.

The ASA is a nation-wide organization comprised of parents of schizophrenia victims who have joined together to inform the public on how to spot the disease and what to do about it.

Provide information

San Francisco spokesman for the ASA, Harry Shifs, said, "We are an educational chapter and our service is to provide information about our own personal experiences with schizophrenia, why we think the orthomolecular method is the best and what doctors in the Bay Area to contact who are using this method."

Shifs said the majority of people who come to the ASA for help are those who have had great difficulties for many years and have already been through an unsuccessful series of experiences with traditional psychoanalysis.

"It doesn't take much understanding to know that when people are schizophrenic or mentally ill, all the talking in the world isn't going to do them any good," said Shifs.

While many psychologists would probably resent Shifs' "layman's" assessment of traditional methods, he is stubborn in his opinion because, he said, he has seen it work in his family with his own child.

Lot of doubts

Shifs offered no more information on his child, but, he said, "People have a lot of doubts about a lot of things but I want to tell you the Department of Mental Hygiene, State of California, has a booklet out called *Research* and in the December, 1970, issue they just finished a twelve-year program of research work at the UCLA neuro-psychiatric clinic and when they came out with the findings—they had them all computerized—they found that the least effective method was psychotherapy.

"It says so right in the book," said Harry. "Anyway, I don't care what the book says and I don't care what people think, it doesn't make a particle of difference to me whether the medical profession does or doesn't think it's good or not, I know it's good."

Shifs again muses, "You know, a lot of people have deficiencies. You know, chemical deficiencies of some kind.

"And the average doctor doesn't go to the trouble, or doesn't want to put the people to the expense of going through all the testing. So they slap them on the butt, and they say, 'You're healthy, your blood is good and you're breathing, so that's good.' "

Photo by Jim McVay

Penned descriptions from patients and relatives cry out feelings of fear, despair, love, hope

Photo by Julian Solomonson

Bill Chapin, author of "Wasted," relaxes at his Sausalito home. He received nearly 200 letters responding to the story of his drug addicted son.

How does insanity feel ? What is it like to be hooked on drugs? Unfortunately, those who know can't tell us. Their desperate messages are scattered and unintelligible.

Only those who have returned from confusion can provide real insight. Their friends and families are able to reconstruct their illnesses through the eyes of the outside world.

Wasted, Journalism assistant professor Bill Chapin's book about his son's drug-induced schizophrenia, drew responses from nearly 200 readers.

His son, Mark, began experimenting with drugs at 14, and eventually became a methadrine addict. In the beginning, he was an intelligent and active high school student who smoked grass in his spare time. As he became more involved with drugs he lost touch with reality. Psychiatrists, unable to reach him, diagnosed him as schizophrenic. He is now in a mental hospital.

In the letters written to Chapin some tried to put their own illnesses into words. Others shared stories of their sons, daughters and grandchildren with the Chapins. All the letters ached with a need to tell the story to someone who might understand.

Here is what they had to say.

The mother of three sons, and a former nervous patient said: *"I could relate not only to the suffering of you and your wife, but also that of your son. If you have not experienced the pain of mental or emotional illness, and the fear that is with you constantly, it is hard to understand. I write today as an average person, not as an expert, with gratitude for my regained health which, in turn, has created a peaceful environment in this home for my husband and children. . . .*

At the height of my illness, my symptoms were overwhelming anxiety, depression, obsessions, compulsions, palpitations, disturbed racing thoughts, feelings of persecutions, fear of being alone or in a crowd, unreality – and most of all an undercurrent of stark fear with me at all times."

A 38-year-old father typed: *"I have had seven years of pyschiatric treatment, with electric and insulin shock, barrels of tranquilizers with no help. Oh, I was helped enough to learn how to control myself, but my inane fears stayed with me: fear to handle sharp objects, fear of the dark. Panic struck me for no reason. I couldn't sleep without strong medication and then was dopey until noon the next day. I hear voices, phone ringing, saw people, was always irritable, angry, couldn't concentrate."*

His disease was probably hereditary in origin, and his children, he feared, were beginning to show symptoms.

A sophomore at a Northern California high school wrote:

I get stoned and have been stoned for the past four months on marijuana. I very seldom take LSD and never for extensive trips, just enough to get me high. I know the road Mark has traveled on. I have planted myself on its path and I can't get out! Or is it that I just won't? Well, anyway, I need some kind of help. . . Last year I attempted suicide and unfortunately didn't succeed. Was that

Continued on next page

Readers respond to family's ordeal with drug addicted son

Readers respond

Continued from page 14

the only way out? I just don't know anymore."

A young woman from Washington said:

"I am pretty good at expressing myself on paper, but sentences fail me when I think of how to describe how the book touched me. Perhaps because I have come so close to being wasted, my bag was suicide, my background was a lot like Mark's, that I feel so close to his dilemma and yours. Despite Mark's illness with all its disgusting side effects, he never lost his appeal to me. He was so real in his helplessness. I felt your overwhelming need to help and the frustration of never knowing how."

A young man scrawled on shorthand paper:

"Your son's life reflects so much of mine that I had to write. The difference is he is in a hospital and I am in prison doing 10 years. . . . Maybe Mark and I could write each other as I know at times the trials we go through are extremely hard and we could provide the needed encouragement to keep on fighting."

The letters sent by parents of mentally ill or drug addicted adolescents were less vivid, but just as poignant. One mother filled a sheet of formal stationary with:

"Our boy Edward, age 21, has been ill since July, 1970, with drug-induced schizophrenia. He has been in (blank) Hospital (hallucinating) then home-regressed, psychotic, then mute and catatonic. I could not cope with him and we placed him in (blank) Hospital for 48 days. Then he was in a halfway house for five months. He was cooperating with us again, driving his car to day treatment and then gradually became uncooperative again."

The mother went on to describe a complicated nightmare of travels, treatments, hospitals, escapes and jails her son had gone through before things began to look hopeful again. She asked the Chapins for advice.

Another mother wrote:

"I have just finished reading Wasted *and I want to tell you I could have written that book, too. My son has been in a state mental hospital for a year. He is the same age as Mark. . . is tall. . .handsome in a confused staring way and has a head covered with red curly hair. My heart is still throbbing with the pain of reliving the past four years again through your book. I would read awhile, put the book down and sob. But I kept reading, hoping you had found an answer."*

In shaky handwriting a grandmother wrote:

"Your son's experience is pretty much that of my grandson, who started on marijuana at 15 – advanced the following year to anything he could get his hands on, even one shot of heroin. . . . When he was 17 I received a phone call from his mother asking if I'd take him. The next day Wayne was here, bag and baggage. We didn't know that he was mentally ill or that he was on drugs. . . . When he arrived he was a thin and nervous wreck . . . With co-operation (the high school principal and a local mental health center), including Wayne, we got him through high school by the skin of his teeth. His psychiatrist told me that Wayne's schizophrenia is genetic, that drugs only triggered it."

A sad but optimistic note was an elegy a father wrote for his murdered daughter. A former heroin addict, she was rehabilitated at the time of her death. He wrote of the young woman:

"She was doing just great. . . . Perhaps to some these little signals don't mean much. But when someone is trying to climb out of the drug culture, it means a lot. She began to kindle some real interest in education last year, thanks to the help and care of some great teachers. She began to develop a real interest in Spanish, and she began getting A's in her Spanish class – her first A's in high school. We talked to her about enrolling for a summer program in Mexico this summer to develop her Spanish ability and she agreed. . . . She began talking about becoming a Spanish interpreter and getting a job at the U.N or something like that. . . . A few months ago on her own initiative, she expressed interest in taking modern dance lessons. . . We began having dinners together as a family – something that had pretty much stopped during the drug period because of all the tension and hostility in the family. . . . That's why Gwen's death is so terribly painful to her mother and me. Because she was making it. Because she had turned the corner. She was going uphill, not downhill."

'I would read awhile, put the book down, and sob...'

The Chapins were offered reams of advice. Psychiatrists and hospitals were named. A school psychologist said psychodrama had worked for some of her drug addicted students. A few people, believing that schizophrenia is caused by poor nutrition, suggested mega-vitamins. Many pleaded with the Chapins to turn to God for help.

In *Wasted* Chapin exhausts just about every possibility for Mark's recovery, but he ends optimistically. The path of a schizophrenic drug addict back to reality is slow and painful, but Chapin is still hopeful. Mark is now at Menninger, a famous and expensive private psychiatric hospital in Topeka, Kansas. "Progress is slow, but he's an awful lot better than when he went in," said Chapin. Mark has been in Menninger for one year.

Photo by Julian Solomonson

May 17,

10 million meals in 23 years, never turned anyone away

Free meals help the needy survive

BY STEVE KURTZ

For two hours a day, six days a week, the small garage door on Jones Street in San Francisco opens, and between 1200 and 1600 people enter for a free meal.

The steep ramp down to St. Anthony's Dining Room has metal hand rails on each wall and another hand rail protruding from the concrete flooring.

Since opening in 1950, St. Anthony's has served over 10 million free meals to the needy of the San Francisco community.

Inside the well-lighted dining hall, about 150 people line up in the serving area. Mirrors on the walls make the dining area look larger than it actually is. Near the end of the month when pension and relief checks have run out, the line of people will overflow through the doors, up the ramp to the street.

Photo by Steve Kurtz

Sister Mary Beatrice serves coffee at St. Anthony's dining room in San Francisco.

Stereotypes

Standing in line are bums, degenerates and outcasts. At least these are the terms usually used to stereotype them. They are unshaven and wearing soiled clothing that doesn't match or fit properly.

Intermingled, suffused into the line are younger individuals, not so shabbily dressed. Embroidering and beads make their clothing appear quite fancy compared to the unkempt appearance of the others in the line.

The men outnumber the women about 15 to 1 in the lines. All types, all races are present for the free noon meal.

Hardly resembling the soup kitchens of the depression, St. Anthony's is more like a grammar school cafeteria. The 250 eating places fill up fast, yet the fluctuation of incoming and departing people usually leaves a few places to sit at all times.

Workers greet the men and women in the line as the food is served. Requests for a little more of this or that are not refused.

Sister Mary

At the end of the serving area, operating the coffee machine, is 73-year-old Sister Mary Beatrice. Every day except Sunday, she comes up from her Burlingame convent to serve the coffee and keep count of the number of meals served.

As the people move to the tables a man in a coffee-brown habit and dark leather sandals greets them. Sometimes standing next to Sister Mary and other times table-hopping, Father Floyd Lotito holds a "person-to-person" rapport with the people who come and go.

Father Floyd is one of two Franciscan fathers who run St. Anthony's. Father Alfred, who founded St. Anthony's in 1950, is the other.

Father Floyd looks like a young businessman with neatly combed black hair and clean-shaven face. Black-rimmed glasses add to the businesslike appearance. Yet an aura of love and friendship surrounds Father Floyd in his work.

'Beautiful people'

His philosophy is "to not be sheltered from the people who use St. Anthony's, but to meet them face to face." In his words, the people he greets are "the really beautiful people of the world."

At St. Anthony's there are no religious restrictions or requirements, although it is run by the two Franciscan fathers. No questions are asked of those who eat there. No religious services are held before or after the meal, except for a short prayer blessing the food. No religious literature is handed out.

According to Father Floyd, all the money and food used comes from individuals in the community. Government, state, city or church money is not used or asked for.

"It is a really beautiful thing, people helping people," says Father Floyd. "We have relied on contributions from the people of the community, mostly many small contributions. In 23 years we have never had to turn a person away for lack of food."

Director

It is his fifth year as assistant director at St. Anthony's. Father Floyd also teaches communication classes at UC Berkeley. He has his master's in communications from Marquette.

"We try to show the people here that they can have love and dignity and that life is worth living," says

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Free meals aid needy

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Father Floyd. "They need to have a chance to communicate again and get back into the community."

The atmosphere in the eating area is relaxed and the noise level indicates that people in St. Anthony's come not only to eat, but also to rap with each other.

Father Floyd attributes this atmosphere to the original street people of the '60s: the real hippies, before being hip became a fad. He says that the young people brought more awareness, more love, and a better view of the "important things in life" to the people of the community.

Things aren't all rosy at St. Anthony's, says Father Floyd. Since the closing of many state mental hospital facilities, there has been an increase in the number of people who have tremendous mental problems. Only about 24 per cent of the people using the dining facility have a serious drinking problem. The remaining large percentage of people have problems ranging from physical and mental handicaps to just being in a financial bind.

So hungry

As the people wait in line to get their food, many are so hungry that they begin eating while being served. Every so often a drunk will go right to the head of the line, pushing and shoving. Usually without a fuss he is smoothly removed to the rear to wait his turn like the others.

Women and the handicapped receive special treatment.

Women are allowed to go to the front of the line if they wish, and the handicapped are served at the table by a volunteer.

The annual food requirements at St. Anthony's are immense: 100,000 pounds of meat; 100,000 pounds of potatoes; 60,000 pounds of dried beans and peas; 20,000 pounds of rice; 20,000 pounds of produce; 8,000 pounds of sugar; 9,000 pounds of coffee; 48,000 loaves of bread; 10,000 pounds of salt; 3,000 gallons of milk; and 10,000 pounds of dessert. The requirements are growing each year.

To serve the noon meal, workers begin preparation at 7:30 a.m. under the supervision of head chef Lou Wing.

Not an easy job

Wing's job is not an easy one. Often the food that is donated is of either an unusual or undesirable type or it is beginning to spoil. Wing says hours are often spent just sorting the good food from the spoiled.

Giving a brief tour through his walk-in refrigerators, Wing shows cases of lettuce where the outer leaves are wilted and starting to decay. Behind the lettuce crates are boxes of cherry tomatoes that are so soft they pop when squeezed.

`Do not beg or steal, come in and eat with us'

Both kinds of vegetables were donated that morning.

Another problem that Wing faces is not knowing what foods will be available day to day, which makes planning of the meals difficult. Still, the aroma of well-prepared food fills the dining hall day after day thanks to Wing's mastery of the art of cooking.

The line coming to the serving area changes minute by minute. As closing time approaches, a few stragglers hurry down the ramp. Near the end of the line is a young teenage boy grasping a snow-white snoopy dog.

"He's mentally retarded," said one of the lady helpers. "He brings his snoopy dog and eats with us every day."

As the young boy goes through the line, he is greeted on a first-name basis by all the servers and he jokes and talks with each one. To him the meal seems secondary.

•••

The Open Door Mission at Seventh and Oak Streets in Oakland sharply contrasts with the facilities and free meal program at St. Anthony's in San Francisco.

The small three-story building lies on the edge of Oakland's Chinese district. It was once a small factory that became so run down it had to be closed. Contrary to the quote on their literature, "The Church's Arm on Skid Row," the Open Door Mission has been caught up in the Oakland redevelopment. A block to the north is the new Bay Area Rapid Transit station. A block to the south is the modern campus of Laney College.

Above the door is a sign with large black letters which reads, "Do not beg or steal, come in and eat with us."

Meals are served there twice a day, yet the monthly total is less than 2500 meals served. The mission has been open seven days a week since it was founded in 1932 by John Lavender. At one time they served 7,000 meals a month.

Doors open

The doors open at 7 a.m. daily, and usually there is a line of about 15 or 20 men waiting to get in. The doors are locked at 8 a.m., with no one permitted after that time. From eight to nine there is a gospel service after which the meal is served. The same program is repeated at 7 p.m.

When the men pass through the doors at the Open Door Mission they are greeted with a basket full of bread out of which they can take a few pieces to hold their hunger until after the service. The first hour before the service can be used by the men to shave or use the bathroom facilities.

Once inside, one of five men hired by the mission on a temporary basis directs the men to benches lined up in a row like in a church. There is a difference, though. For on the back of each bench is nailed a long flat board which serves as a table for the men to eat on.

At the end of the double rows of old wooden benches is an altar with a cross on the front. The high windows furnish some light in the daytime, with dim lighting at night from bare overhead bulbs.

A "no sleeping" sign hangs conspicuously at the front wall near the altar. The smell of disinfectant, used when scrubbing floors, fills the lower level.

Bench room

There is enough bench room for 130 people, but only the front benches are used because of the small number of meals served. The other benches are roped off.

Hans Stadler, secretary and superintendent of the mission, has worked there for 30 years.

Stadler says that even though his program is non-denominational, he uses the Bible to "give the message" to the destitute men of skid row who use the facilities. With traces of a Swiss accent he added, "We have no axes to grind with any denominations, but we do follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Stadler points out that they have to deal with men who are not sympathetic to them. "There is always plenty of food, but we want to give the men spiritual food too. We are not just a feeding station; we want to teach them something."

Drinking problem

The men who use the Open Door Mission seem to be of similar situations. Unlike the estimated 24 per cent of people with drinking problems at St. Anthony's, the majority of men who come to the Open Door Mission have a drinking problem.

"We don't turn men away who are hungry," said Stadler. "But we don't let a man in who has been drinking heavily, because we can't get our message across to them."

Stadler emphasizes that "we don't pry into the men's lives. We just try and preach the gospel."

But for the men who attend the services, singing hymns and listening to the sermon, it seems it is only a means for reaching a more immediate goal, the free meal.

Photo by Steve Kurtz

A doctor's signature makes 'street' drugs respectable and legal

The controversy over pharmaceutical drugs

BY BILL GALLAGHER

The sixties was the "Drug Decade." During those 10 years, an infatuation with the non-medical use of drugs became the cornerstone of a sub-culture. "Street" drugs were to blame for all that was wrong with "those" people.

But those "street" drugs have always been in copious supply in pharmacies everywhere, available upon the presentation of a doctor's signature. They were the panacea for every ill from obesity to tension. Classified as amphetamines and barbiturates, they were the "respectable" drugs abused only when they fell into the wrong hands.

Amphetamines found a home. Congressman Claude Pepper (D.-Florida) read the following statement into the Congressional Record of Feb. 1, 1972: "Amphetamines are the drug of the white American with money to spend. Street use, contrary to the popular myths, accounts for a small percentage of the total consumption.

"Most of the pills are eaten by housewives, businessmen, students, physicians, truck drivers and athletes. Aside from the needle and the dose, the "speed freak" is distinguishable because his use has been branded as illegal. A doctor's signature supplies the ordinary user with lawful pills."

The statement was part of an article by James M. Graham, titled "Amphetamine Politics On Capitol Hill." The article details the measures employed by the government to cut down amphetamine abuse by restricting the flow of the drug.

Graham was not particularly kind to the pharmaceutical industry in America. He claims that they manufacture annually enough amphetamines to provide a month's supply to every man, woman and child in the United States.

Janice, a 20 year old college student in San Francisco, has no trouble getting her share of that month's supply. "A friend of mine who is a little overweight gets enough for me and my roommates every time finals come around," she said.

"A supply of 30 dex tabs (Dexedrine) will get us all through the four or five days with just a little sleep. We figure nothing can happen in that much time and it helps us concentrate on studying for hours at a time."

Janice comes from Los Angeles. "My friends down there tell me it's just as easy to get speed there. But they don't bother to get it from drug stores, they just get it from friends for 25 cents a tab."

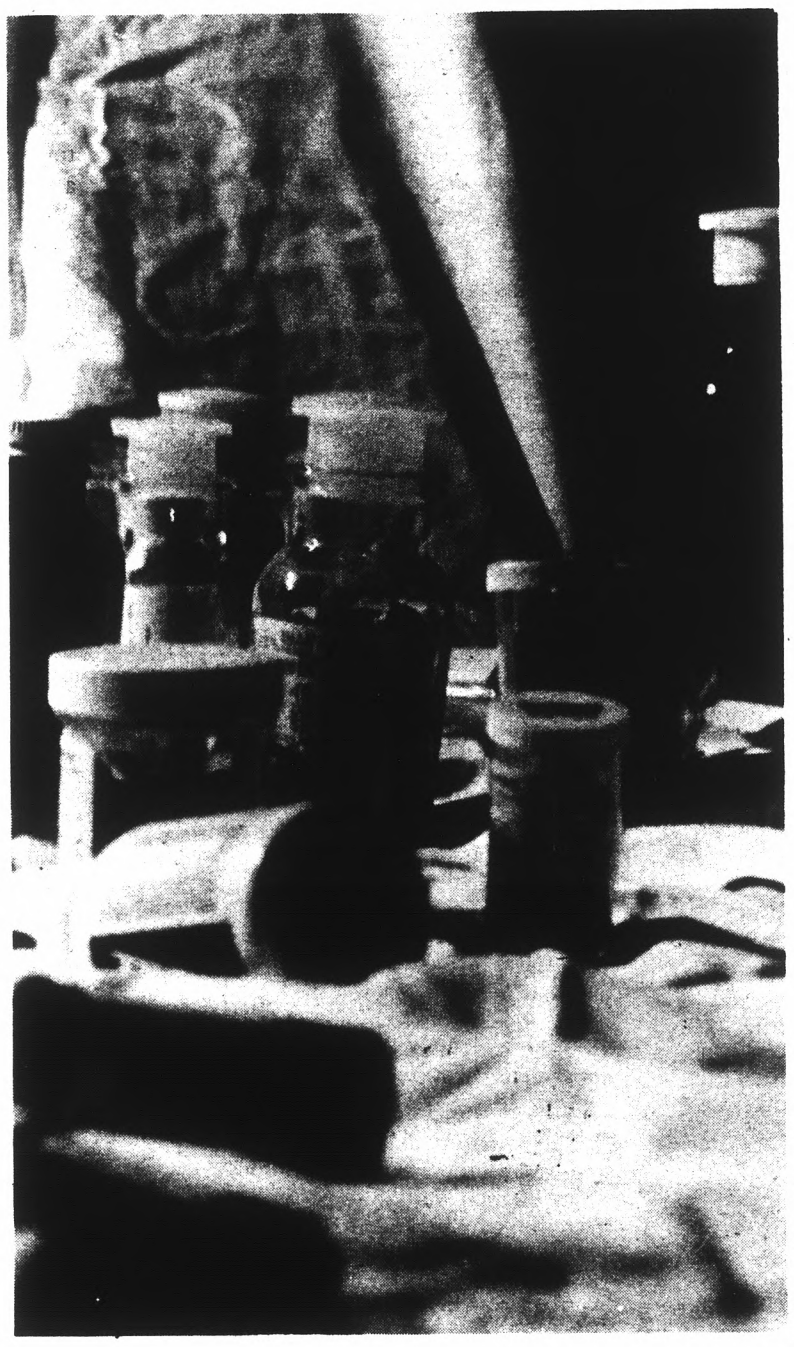

Photo by D.M. Cole

She explained, "We're not speed freaks or anything like that, we just use it twice a year at finals. We almost look forward to doing it together, just staying up all night and studying and stuff."

Amphetamines were first being developed in 1927 with the discovery of Benzedrine. The drugs got their greatest use, however, in World War II.

German Panzer troops in that war were existing on little more than the Fuhrer's orders and huge doses of methamphetamine. They were not restricted to the Nazi effort, though. According to British war statistics, 72 million standard dose amphetamine tablets were distributed to the British armed forces alone.

Today it is the civilian population that is receiving the huge amounts of central nervous system stimulants. In 1971, more than 12 billion standard dose amphetamine tablets were produced. Of those, an estimated 50 per cent were diverted to the flourishing black market.

Amphetamines are supposed to be used for three medical situations: cases of narcolepsy (a rare disease which causes persons to fall asleep at all times); in hyperactive children with brain dysfunctions; and in obesity therapy. This final situation led to amphetamine being called "diet pills" and is the reason that amphetamines are so abused.

Dr. John D. Griffith of the School of Medicine at Vanderbilt University is one of many who testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Amphetamine Abuse and Regulation that amphetamines should not be used in obesity therapy. "A few thousand tablets of amphetamines would supply the whole medical needs of this country," he said.

Dr. Stanley Yolles of the National Institute on Mental Health, told the same committee 21 per cent of

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Drugs

Signature makes 'street' variety respectable

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all college students had taken amphetamines, with the family medicine cabinet acting as the primary source."

Peter Bowen, 30, was once included in that twenty-one per cent. The drug was methadrine, but the source was a friend who worked at an all-night clinic, not the family medicine cabinet.

Amphetamine family

"I got involved with the 'amphetamine family' when I was a sophomore at Occidental College in Los Angeles," Bowen said. "That was in 1962 and 1963.

"I found myself developing poor study habits. When exam time would roll around I would be pretty unprepared. I explained this to a friend of mine who worked in an all-night clinic and had access to almost anything. He laid some methadrine tabs on me so I wouldn't have to sleep and could study extensively.

"As well as keeping me awake, these were increasing my concentration," Bowen said. "I found I started liking them. Finals passed and this went on for two years.

"It got to the point where I was taking massive amounts of pills, like twenty meth tabs a day. I was pretty disillusioned," he said.

A craving

Did he have a craving for them?

"Very definitely. I'd shovel in three or four tabs in the morning and wash it down with a glass of wine."

And his social life for those two years?

"I think essentially it kept me going longer when I was out drinking. It probably made me sharper with people or less than charitable."

And how did he come off his amphetamine habit?

"By just stopping. It was an absurdly rough period, I was going pretty bananas. I smoked a lot of grass at the time, infact I was smashed on weed for three or four weeks."

That he didn't turn to barbiturates to come off of amphetamines, Bowen is lucky. Barbiturates are a central nervous system depressant that are officially prescribed to reduce tension and anxiety and induce sleep.

Photo by William Wells

Barbiturate addiction can be as dangerous or worse than heroin or morphine addiction, because an overdose of barbiturates is likely to kill a person. As "sleeping pills," barbiturates are most notorious. Marilyn Monroe and Judy Garland both committed suicide by an overdose of "sleeping pills."

In testifying before the Senate Subcommittee on amphetamine abuse, Steve Sharp of Maryland

'I was taking 20 meth tabs a day. I was disillusioned.'

drew the line between "speed" and barbiturates.

"Basically, speed is more or less like a stimulant, where it picks up your body and speeds the process," Sharp said. The barbs are more or less something that gives you a drunk feeling, if that makes any sense. It's really hard to explain what it's like. You really have to experience it to find out," he said.

Dr. Donald R. Wesson of the Haight-Ashbury Medical Clinic told a Senate Subcommittee hearing in 1971 his views on barbiturate abuse.

Oral abuse

"The oral abuse of barbiturates as a chronic intoxicant is the classical pattern of abuse. This most frequently occurs in individuals from age 30 tp 50 who obtain their supply from physicians rather than "street dealers." They visit many different physicians with the same complaint, usually that they can't sleep, and get several prescriptions for barbs."

Watson also noted that those who can't get heroin will usually turn to barbiturates.

Dr. Eugene Bossi, director of the SF State Student Health Center, said the barbiturates used as sleeping pills were "worse than worthless.

"What the sleeping pills do is disturb sleep patterns, and within three days of use you can develop a very high tolerance," Bossi said. "Most people don't know it, but taking just one sleeping pill a night is a psychological rahter than a biological effect. It does the same thing that shooting up any innocous substance does for the heroin addict."

Get into cycle

Few occasional users of amphetemine get into the cycle of taking barbiturates to come down from an amphetamine "high."

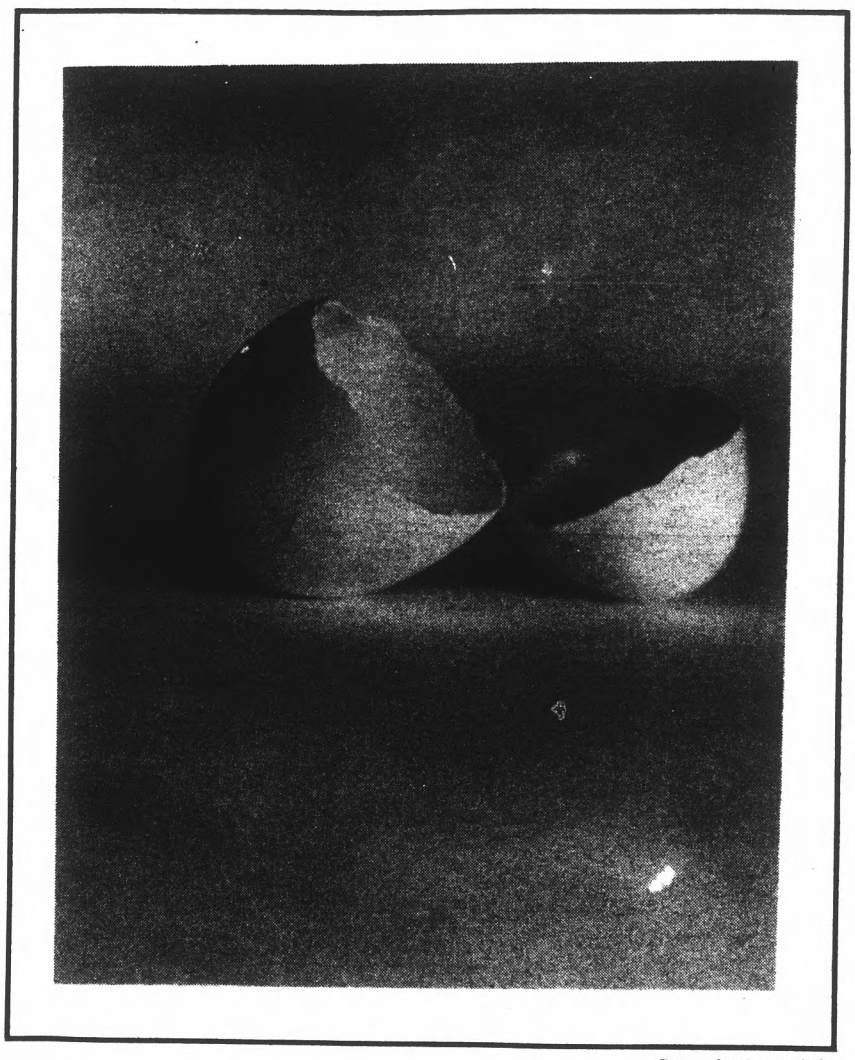
Then there are some, like Janice, who has another way to come down from an amphetamine binge. "I just pack up and fly down to Los Angeles and lay on the beach for a couple of days." she said. "Just do absolutely nothing for about three days."

Until then, her small vial of drug store "speed" sits on her shelf. It will be there when exams come around.

One result of the Senate Subcommittee hearings on Amphetamine abuse was a 749 page report. This report includes all the testimony and evidence heard by the committee.

On page 749 of that report, after all the indexes and glossaries, are they lyrics to a popular song of the "Drug Decade":

"Kids are different today
I hear every mother say:
Mother needs something today
to calm her down
And though she's not really ill,
There's a little yellow pill. . ."



Covers by D. M. Cole